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Cheryl Nicholas, Kerry Bennington,
Lisa Pemberton

SURGERY HOURS AND SERVICES

CONSULTATIONS can be arranged by
phoning. 5655 1355

Monday to Friday 9.00am–5.30pm

Saturday 9.00am–12.00noon
(phone lines open at 8.30am)

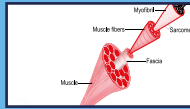
The practice prefers to see patients by
appointment in order to minimise people's
waiting time.

Home visits can be arranged when
necessary. If you need a home visit,
please contact the surgery as soon as
possible after 8.30am.

For After hours emergency medical
attention – at night, weekends or public
holidays please call 03 56542753 where
a nurse will triage your needs and contact
the doctor on call.

YOUR DOCTOR

AUGUST 2024



**FASCINATING
FASCIA**



**MIDDLE EAR
INFECTIONS**



**DASH TOWARD
HEART HEALTH**



**MORE THAN
MORNING
SICKNESS?**

Compliments of your GP

Understanding Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)

Have you ever experienced an unusual sensation like sudden numbness, trouble speaking, or dizziness? You may dismiss these as nothing serious, but they could be a warning sign known as a transient ischemic attack, or TIA.

What is a TIA?

TIA is sometimes called a "mini-stroke." It happens when blood flow to a part of your brain is briefly blocked. Blood carries vital oxygen and nutrients to your brain - without them, brain cells begin to die.

Even if the blockage clears and symptoms disappear, they're signalling an underlying issue that is putting you at risk of a more severe stroke in the near future.

Recognising a TIA

The signs of a TIA are similar to those of a stroke but typically last only a few minutes to an hour. They don't usually cause permanent damage, but may leave you with fatigue or affect your mental health. The symptoms include the sudden onset of:

- numbness or weakness in your face, arm, or leg, particularly on one side of your body
- confusion or trouble speaking and understanding speech
- difficulty seeing, or blurriness in one or both eyes
- difficulty walking, dizziness, or loss of balance and coordination.

Although these symptoms can disappear within minutes and you may feel ok, don't ignore them. Seek medical attention immediately; after a TIA your risk of stroke is higher – especially in the first few days.

Are strokes serious?

Yes, stroke events are one of the leading causes of death and a top cause of disability in Australia, with many survivors facing long-term effects on their daily lives.

In 2020, there were an estimated 39,500 stroke events in Australia – that's around one every 15 minutes. Without action it's predicted that these figures will increase.

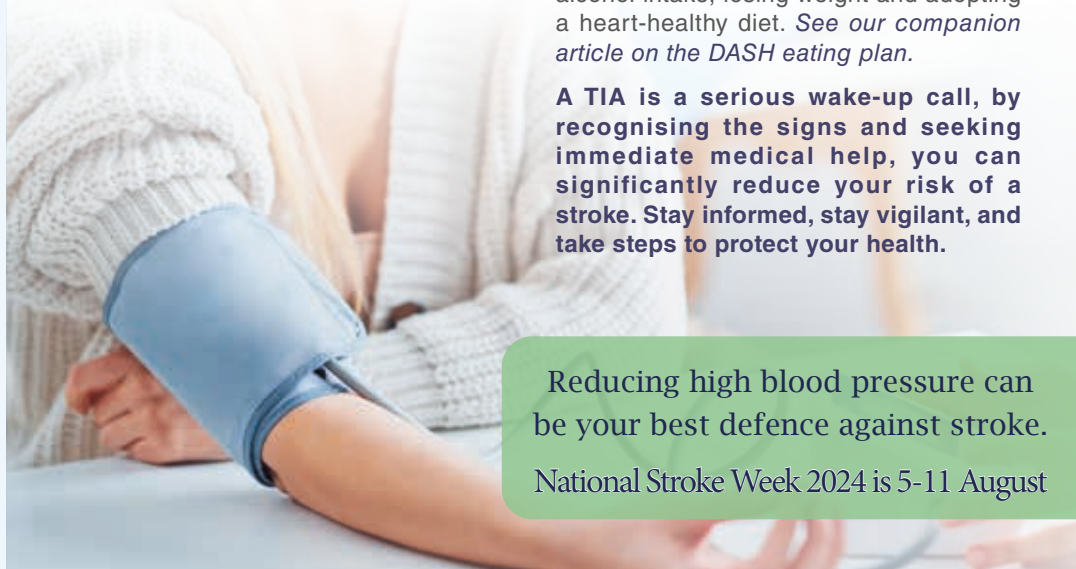
Prevention and next steps

Early detection and risk management can reduce the likelihood of a stroke. In fact, more than 80 percent of strokes can be prevented through lifestyle changes and managing conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, and high cholesterol.

Having multiple risk factors greatly increases the chance of a stroke. After a TIA, your doctor may recommend tests, referrals, medications, medical procedures, and lifestyle changes to minimise your risk.

Lifestyle improvements may include: regular exercise, quitting smoking, limiting alcohol intake, losing weight and adopting a heart-healthy diet. *See our companion article on the DASH eating plan.*

A TIA is a serious wake-up call, by recognising the signs and seeking immediate medical help, you can significantly reduce your risk of a stroke. Stay informed, stay vigilant, and take steps to protect your health.



Reducing high blood pressure can be your best defence against stroke.

National Stroke Week 2024 is 5-11 August

Our newsletter is free! Please take a copy with you.

Understanding middle ear infections in children

Most ear infections happen in the middle ear, the part of the ear behind the eardrum. This condition is called otitis media, and is especially common in young children. Knowing more about it can help us to care for them.

Why is it more common in children?

The Eustachian tube connects the middle ear to the throat, letting air in and draining fluid out. After an infection, germs can reach the middle ear, causing the tube to swell or fill with mucus, which can cause pain.

Otitis media is common in young children because their immune systems and Eustachian tubes are still developing. The tube is more prone to blockages as it's narrower and less slanted than in adults and older children.

What happens if left untreated?

Leaving ear infections untreated can result in more severe conditions.

Constantly having fluid or infection in the middle ear can cause damage which may lead to hearing loss. The infection may also spread to nearby structures like the mastoid bone, situated just behind the ear. This is called mastoiditis which can cause severe pain and swelling and further complications if not treated.

Recognising an ear infection

Recognising an ear infection in your child can be tricky, but there are signs: your baby may be tugging or pulling their ear, crying more than usual, having trouble sleeping, or experiencing a fever.

Older children might complain of ear pain or trouble hearing. Sometimes, you might notice fluid draining from the ear, which is a more definite sign that something is wrong.

Can it be prevented?

Ear infections often arise from a simple cold which is hard to prevent, but good hygiene can help lower the chance of catching one. You can also lower your child's risk of ear infections by:

- Keeping them away from cigarette smoke.
- Limit/stop them from using a dummy.
- Breastfeed your baby if you can.
- When bottle feeding, keep your baby upright and don't give them a bottle in bed.

- Keep up to date with all childhood vaccinations.

When to go to the doctor

Although middle ear infections can resolve on their own, it's best to prioritise your child's health. If you observe any symptoms, consult your doctor, especially if it happens frequently. Prompt medical attention is crucial if your child experiences severe pain, a high fever, or appears unusually drowsy or unresponsive.

Ear infections can lead to discomfort and potentially serious complications if untreated. Monitoring your child's symptoms and knowing when to seek medical assistance can ensure they have a swift recovery.

It's important not to ignore the symptoms of an ear infection

WORD SEARCH PUZZLE

- ALCOHOL
- CALCIUM
- CARDIOVASCULAR
- CHOLESTEROL
- DASH
- DIZZINESS
- EAR
- FASCIA
- FIBRE
- HYDRATION
- HYGIENE
- INFECTION
- INFLAMMATION
- MAGNESIUM
- MASTOIDITIS
- MUCUS
- NAUSEA
- OESTROGEN
- PAIN
- POTASSIUM
- PROPRIOCEPTION
- PROTEIN
- RISK
- TOXINS
- WATER

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The DASH Eating Plan: a path to a healthy heart!

The DASH Eating Plan is a diet that's more than just about slimming down or counting kilojoules – it's about taking care of your heart, and for some people it could life-saving.

DASH stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. Fancy name, right? Basically, it's a balanced eating plan designed to lower blood pressure and improve overall health.

DASH encourages reducing sodium intake and emphasises a balanced intake of foods rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, fibre, and protein. These include vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, fish, poultry, beans, nuts, and certain vegetable oils.

DASH aims to limit foods with added sugar, and saturated and trans fats, such as in fatty meats, full-fat dairy products, and coconut and palm oils.

The benefits of the DASH plan

Chiefly, it has proven effective in lowering blood pressure, a critical factor in reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) such as heart attack and stroke. DASH may further reduce CVD risk by helping to lower cholesterol and body mass index (BMI).

The wholesome, unprocessed and satisfying foods help with weight management and overall well-being.

Is the DASH plan hard to follow?

The DASH plan might be challenging at first, especially if you're used to processed foods high in sodium and sugar. And let's be real – saying goodbye to your favourite salty snack or sweet treat can be tough.

The DASH plan requires perseverance, but even small changes can lead to big benefits.

On the plus side DASH isn't about deprivation or strict rules, it's flexible and the food is readily available in Australia. There's also plenty of information available to help you learn about it and plan what to eat.

Precautionary advice

While DASH is beneficial for most people, if you have a specific dietary restriction or medical condition, consult with your doctor before diving in. Sometimes a referral to a dietitian may be recommended for tailored advice.

DASH is about nourishing your body with wholesome fresh foods that leave you feeling energised - and it could save your life!

Try out our DASH-friendly recipe



Slow cooked Moroccan chicken

This dish is packed with lean protein, fibre, and vegetables, making it nutritious and flavourful.

INGREDIENTS:

- 500g skinless chicken breast or boneless thighs, chopped
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp paprika
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 400g can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 2 zucchini, sliced
- 1 400g can cherry tomatoes
- 250ml low-sodium chicken stock
- Fresh coriander chopped, for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Heat olive oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook until browned, about 4-6 minutes. Transfer to slow cooker.
2. In same pan, add onion and garlic and sauté for 2-3 minutes. Stir in cumin, coriander, paprika, cinnamon and cook for a minute until fragrant. Add mixture to slow cooker.
3. Add drained chickpeas, sliced zucchini, and tomatoes to slow cooker. Pour in chicken stock; stir well to combine all ingredients.
4. Cook on low for 6-8 hours or on high for 3-4 hours, until chicken is cooked through.
5. Serve with cooked couscous or quinoa. Garnish with fresh chopped coriander if desired.

Beyond morning sickness: understanding and managing hyperemesis gravidarum

Imagine you're newly pregnant and expecting some morning sickness - just a bit of nausea and queasiness. But instead, you can't keep anything down and feel utterly exhausted. This could be hyperemesis gravidarum, a severe form of nausea and vomiting.

Morning sickness is common and usually involves mild nausea and occasional vomiting, tiredness, and a slight loss of appetite. Despite its name, it can occur at any time of the day and typically subsides by the end of the first trimester. Hyperemesis gravidarum (HG) lasts longer and is much more severe than morning sickness.

HG also begins within the first six weeks of pregnancy, but the nausea is persistent, and vomiting can be severe. This can lead to weight loss, dehydration, and electrolyte imbalances, and often requires hospitalisation. HG can be extremely debilitating, causing fatigue that lasts for months.

The exact cause of HG isn't fully understood, but it's believed to be related to the rapid increase in hormone levels during pregnancy, particularly human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) and oestrogen. There's also evidence suggesting that genetics may play a role.

Living with HG can be daunting, as everyday activities become overwhelming and the joy

of pregnancy is overshadowed by constant misery. However, there are some common strategies to manage HG that may also help with morning sickness:

- Hydration is crucial; sip small amounts of fluids regularly.
- Eat small, frequent meals rather than three large ones.
- Identify and avoid food and smells that trigger vomiting.
- Ginger, in forms like tea or biscuits, may reduce nausea.
- Rest and get support from family and friends.

If you suspect you have HG, seek medical advice promptly. Early intervention can prevent complications and help you find strategies to cope with the condition. Remember, it is temporary, and with the right help you can navigate this tough phase.



Fascinating fascia: the hidden key to health

Did you know that your body has an intricate substance that wraps and weaves around every muscle, bone, nerve, and organ? It's called fascia, and research is shedding light on its critical role in our health and well-being.

What is fascia?

Fascia is a connective tissue made up of multiple layers that form a continuous sheet. Imagine it like a web, enveloping and connecting all parts of your body, ensuring they communicate and coordinate.

It's more than just 'packing' material. Fascia provides support, strength, protection, and structure - keeping everything in place and functioning smoothly. It helps transmit force throughout your body, aiding in movement and stability. It can stretch, contract and relax independently. Fascia even plays a role in proprioception - your sense of your body's position in space.

Fascia has its own nerve supply, making it as sensitive as skin. It also appears to be linked to musculoskeletal pain by transmitting tension and inflammation across the body. Additionally, it supports your lymphatic system - a drainage system that removes toxins - by aiding fluid movement and immune cell transport.

Can fascia be damaged?

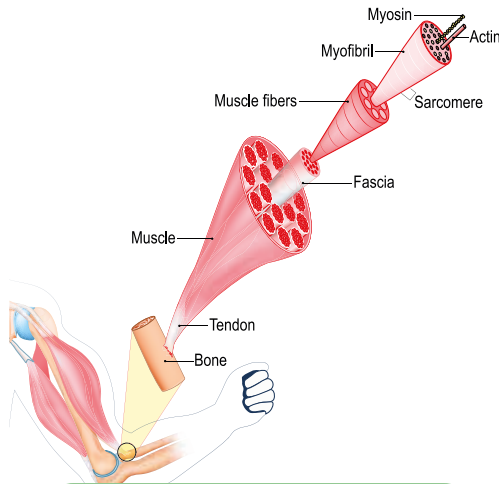
Fascia contains a substance that allows its layers to slide smoothly over each other. Just like engine lubricant, this prevents various parts in your body from becoming damaged and dysfunctional. However, fascia can dry up from trauma - like injury or surgery, lack of movement, or chronic stress. It can tighten; becoming thick, sticky, and rigid, leading to pain and restricted mobility.

What can be done to keep fascia healthy? You can see how essential fascia is. To keep it healthy, regular physical activity is

crucial, and stretching, yoga, and Pilates are excellent ways to keep it flexible. Hydration is also essential - fascia needs plenty of water to function well.

A therapy known as myofascial release may benefit fascia and help reduce chronic pain. This technique involves applying gentle manual pressure to the deep tissue to release tension and improve movement.

By understanding the role of fascia and taking steps to keep it healthy, we can enhance our overall well-being and reduce the risk of pain and injury. The next time you stretch, or drink a glass of water, think about how you're helping your fascia and benefitting your whole body!



Fascia is an incredible and vital part of our bodies that deserves more attention.

INFLUENZA IN 2024

Influenza is a common viral infection that affects people of all ages.

While it may be a mild disease for some, it can also cause serious illness and even lead to hospitalisation in otherwise healthy people.

Vaccination, administered annually by a health professional is the safest means of protection from influenza.

Each year the virus' circulating can vary, this is why annual vaccination is very important. There are different vaccine brands available for different age groups, all brands are quadrivalent, which means they contain 4 viral strains. Influenza vaccines have been around for many decades and are very safe. The vaccine does not contain any live viruses and therefore cannot give you influenza. Common side effects are mild pain, redness and swelling at the injection site, more serious reactions are very rare.

Flu vaccination is strongly recommended and free under the National Immunisation Program for the following people:

- Children aged 6 months to less than 5 years
- Pregnant women at any stage during pregnancy
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 6 months and over
- People aged 65 years and over
- People aged 6 months and over with certain medical conditions.

If you are not eligible for the free vaccine you can purchase the vaccine from participating pharmacies or speak to your GP.

What else can you do to stay healthy during Flu season?

- Hand Hygiene - washing your hands regularly with soap and water or using handrub is the most important routine to include in your day.
- Cover your mouth – If you feel a sneeze or cough coming on and you don't have a tissue handy, it is important to cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wear a mask.
- Stay home – Staying at home while you are unwell is the best way to avoid spreading the flu or covid.
- Eat lots of fruit and vegetables.
- Stay active – 30 minutes a day of activity.

Flu vaccine will be available from late April, 2024.

Questions to ask at your next doctor's visit

Asking questions is key to good communication with your doctor. To make the most of your visit, write down what you want to know in the area below. Bring this list to your next appointment so you remember what you wanted to ask.

DOCTOR'S NAME	DATE	TIME
1.		
2.		
3.		
NOTES:		

Disclaimer: The information in this newsletter is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Decisions relating to your health should always be made in consultation with your health care provider. Talk to your doctor first.